

# Oliver Twist

IN THIS STORY OF SURVIVAL, A YOUNG ORPHAN IS DESPERATE FOR FRIENDS. CAN HE TRUST THE PEOPLE HE MEETS? FIND OUT IN THIS ADAPTATION OF THE CLASSIC NOVEL BY CHARLES DICKENS.

ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY CHARLES DICKENS

## SCENE 1

**N1:** More than 200 years ago, a young orphan named Oliver Twist is sent to a workhouse outside London, England.

**N2:** It's a dark, mean, and dingy place, where homeless adults and children are forced to work in exchange for food and shelter.

**N3:** All day long, Oliver labors making ropes. He is always hungry and tired.

**N4:** One evening, when Oliver is 9 years old, he sits at a table with other orphans after the cook ladles a small helping of gruel into their bowls. The boys swallow the thin soup in seconds, but they're still hungry.

**BOY 1** (*whispering to Oliver*):

Psst! Ask for some more gruel.

**OLIVER** (*terrified*): Me?

**BOY 2** (*whispering*): Someone has to do it.

**N1:** Trembling, Oliver walks slowly toward the cook, carrying his empty bowl in his shaking hands.

**OLIVER:** Please, sir, I want some more.

**N2:** The room falls silent. You could hear a pin drop. Oliver practically hears his own heart beat. Everyone stares at Oliver.

**COOK** (*shocked*): What did you say?

**OLIVER:** Please, sir, I want some more.

**COOK** (*yelling*): More?! More?! I'll give you more—more beatings!

**N3:** As punishment, the manager of the workhouse, Mr. Bumble, makes Oliver dig graves in the

graveyard.

**MR. BUMBLE:** You ungrateful orphan!

**N4:** Oliver keeps digging with a shovel and tries to ignore Mr. Bumble.

**MR. BUMBLE:** By the way, how's your mother?

**OLIVER:** You know very well that she died years ago.

**MR. BUMBLE:** Ah, yes. I remember now. I seem to recall hearing that she was not a very good woman.

**OLIVER:** That's not true! Don't talk about my mother!

**N1:** Oliver hits Mr. Bumble with the shovel.

**MR. BUMBLE:** Help! Oliver Twist is trying to murder me!

**N2:** Oliver takes advantage of the moment and runs away.

## Characters

Write your initials next to the character you're going to read. *\*Starred characters are major roles.*

\_\_\_\_ **\*NARRATOR 1 (N1)**

\_\_\_\_ **\*NARRATOR 2 (N2)**

\_\_\_\_ **\*NARRATOR 3 (N3)**

\_\_\_\_ **\*NARRATOR 4 (N4)**

\_\_\_\_ **BOY 1,**  
an orphan

\_\_\_\_ **\*OLIVER TWIST,**  
a young orphan

\_\_\_\_ **BOY 2,**  
another orphan

\_\_\_\_ **COOK**

\_\_\_\_ **MR. BUMBLE,**  
workhouse manager

\_\_\_\_ **\*THE ARTFUL  
DODGER,** a young  
pickpocket

\_\_\_\_ **\*FAGIN,** manager of  
young thieves

\_\_\_\_ **\*NANCY,** a thief

\_\_\_\_ **BOOKSELLER**

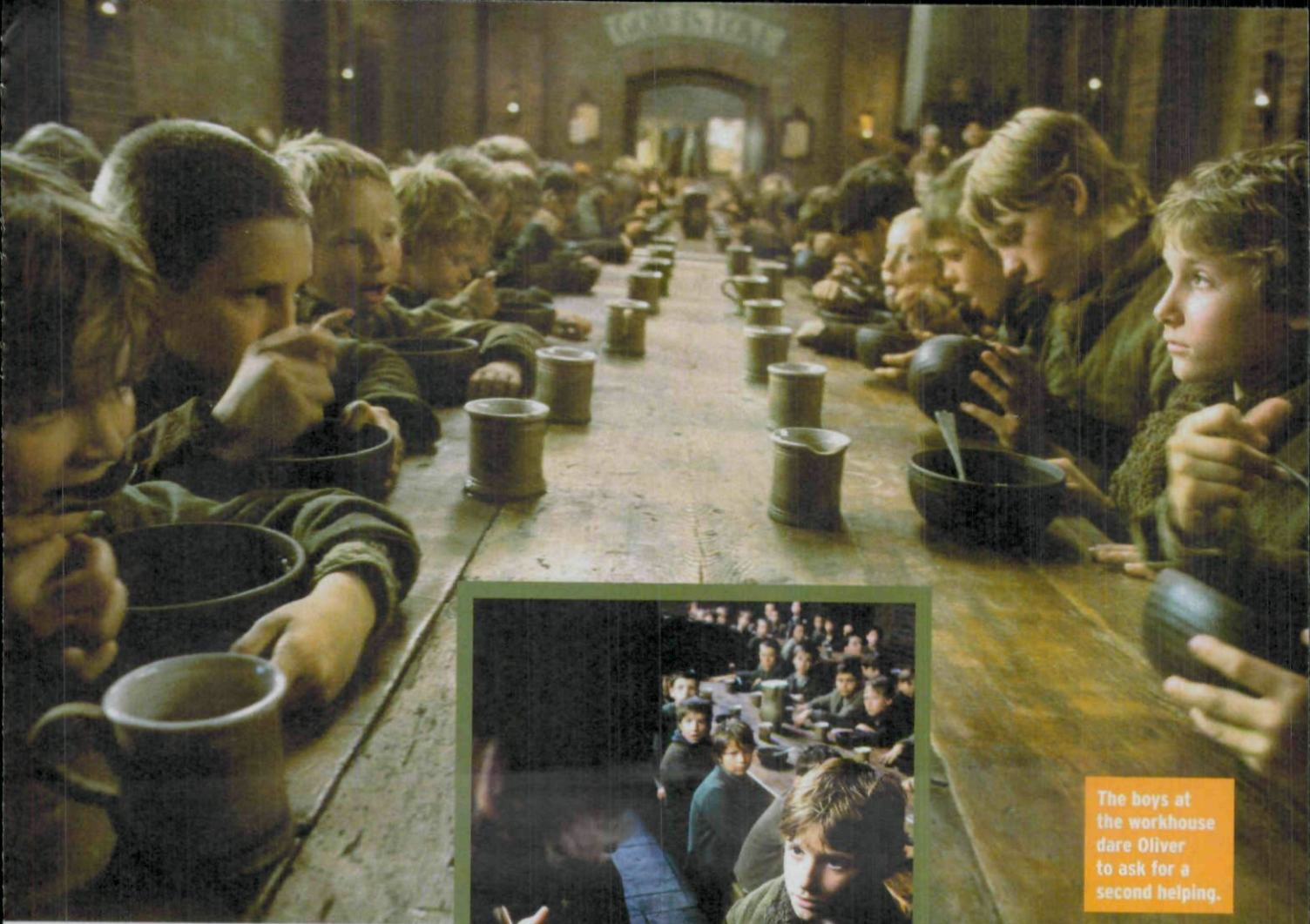
\_\_\_\_ **CROWD**

\_\_\_\_ **POLICE OFFICER**

\_\_\_\_ **\*MR. BROWNLOW,**  
a kind old gentleman

\_\_\_\_ **JUDGE FANG**





The boys at the workhouse dare Oliver to ask for a second helping.



## SCENE 2

**N3:** Days later, Oliver wanders the streets of London. Exhausted, he sits down on a curb to rest.

**N4:** A boy Oliver's age approaches wearing a man's coat and a dented top hat.

**ARTFUL DODGER:** My name's Jack. But I'm better known as the Artful Dodger.

**\*BILL SIKES,**

a brutal burglar and Nancy's boyfriend

**MRS. BEDWIN,**

Mr. Brownlow's housekeeper

**PASSERBY,**

a person on the street

**OLIVER:** I'm Oliver Twist.

**DODGER:** You look a bit tired.

**OLIVER:** I've been walking for days.

**DODGER:** Where are you going?

**OLIVER:** I don't really know.

**DODGER:** Well you can't stay on the street. I know a good inn where you can stay. Are you hungry?

**N1:** Oliver nods weakly.

**DODGER:** I'll fix you up.

**N2:** Dodger leads Oliver past a stall in an outdoor market, then

around a corner.

**OLIVER:** Why are you called the Artful Dodger?

**DODGER** (opening his coat): Here's why.

**N3:** Dodger reveals a loaf of bread and some ham.

Oliver stares in amazement. He's too mesmerized by the food to realize Dodger stole it from the market moments ago.

**DODGER:** Eat up, Oliver. I'll show you a place you can stay tonight.

**N4:** Dodger takes him to a street full of ragged children. They enter a building.

**N1:** Upstairs is a dirty but cozy room. Several boys are eating bread and butter. An old man fries sausages over an open fire.

**DODGER:** Fagin, this is my new



friend, Oliver Twist.

**FAGIN** (*smiling slyly*): Ah, so nice to meet you, my dear. Welcome to our little family. Consider yourself at home. There isn't a lot to spare, but whatever we've got, we share. Boys, eat up, then we'll teach Oliver our game.

**N2**: After dinner, Fagin takes a wallet, a watch, and a white silk handkerchief from a shelf, and puts them in his pockets.

**FAGIN**: Watch the other boys, Oliver. Then see if you can take something from me without my noticing.

**N3**: Fagin pretends to read while the boys pick his pockets. Then it's Oliver's turn. He pulls out the handkerchief.

**OLIVER**: I got it!

**FAGIN**: Well done, Oliver!

**N4**: A young woman enters. She sees Oliver.

**NANCY**: Teaching him the tricks of the trade, eh, Fagin?

**FAGIN**: Oliver, this is our friend Nancy.

**N1**: Oliver bows politely. The other boys laugh.

**NANCY**: What a little gentleman! Sit next to me, Oliver.

**N2**: Oliver feels at home with his new friends. He doesn't realize Fagin is training him to be a thief!

## SCENE 3

**N3**: The next day, Dodger and Oliver walk through a fancy neighborhood. Dodger spots a well-dressed gentleman named Mr. Brownlow browsing at a bookstall.

**N4**: Dodger slips his hand into Mr. Brownlow's pocket. Oliver watches, horrified. Dodger pulls out a silk handkerchief. The bookseller sees him.

**BOOKSELLER**: Stop, thief!

**N1**: Dodger darts through a doorway. Mr. Brownlow and others turn and see Oliver. Panicked, Oliver starts running.

**CROWD**: Stop, thief!

**N2**: The crowd chases Oliver. He trips, and the people surround him. A police officer pushes through the **frenetic** mass of onlookers, followed by Mr. Brownlow.

**POLICE OFFICER**: Is this the boy?

**OLIVER**: It wasn't me, sir!

**POLICE OFFICER** (*sarcastically*): Of course it wasn't. It never is.

**N3**: The officer escorts Oliver to the police station, then to the courthouse. Oliver stands before Judge Fang.

**N4**: Mr. Brownlow arrives. He feels sorry for Oliver.

**JUDGE FANG** (*to Oliver*): Stand up straight, young man.

**OLIVER**: I feel sick, sir.

**MR. BROWNLOW**: The boy is ill.

**JUDGE FANG**: Nonsense! Oliver Twist, I sentence you to three months of hard labor.

**N1**: A door bursts open, and the bookseller rushes in.

**BOOKSELLER**: Stop the proceedings!

**JUDGE FANG**: What now?

**BOOKSELLER**: This boy is innocent. A different boy robbed Mr. Brownlow.

**JUDGE FANG**: Fine. This boy is free to go. Next case!

**N2**: Outside, Oliver faints.

**MR. BROWNLOW**: Poor Oliver. I'll take care of you.

**N3**: Mr. Brownlow takes Oliver to his home. He has no idea that Oliver is the son of his friend Edwin, who died nine years earlier.

## SCENE 4

**N4**: Back at Fagin's place, the Artful Dodger is in trouble.

**FAGIN**: Where's Oliver? Answer me or I'll throttle you!

**DODGER**: The coppers got him.

**FAGIN**: You stupid, **impetuous** boy! It was reckless of you to let that happen!

**N1**: Fagin hurls a metal cup at Dodger, who ducks just as the door opens. The cup almost hits Bill Sikes, Nancy's boyfriend, who is a menacing thug.

**BILL** (*angrily*): Who threw that?

**FAGIN**: Bill, my dear. Come in.

**N2**: Bill's mean-looking dog, Bull's-eye, follows Bill inside.

**BILL**: Get me a drink, Fagin. And don't poison it.

**N3**: Bill throws a canvas bag on the table. Fagin greedily opens it and takes out stolen jewelry. Bill brought the jewelry to Fagin for him to sell.

**BILL**: What were you two just fighting about?

**DODGER**: A new kid, Oliver. He got copped.

**BILL** (*indifferently*): So what?

**FAGIN**: I'm afraid he'll say something and get us in trouble.

**BILL** (*grinning*): You'll be hanged, Fagin—and about time.

**FAGIN**: It would come out worse for you than for me, Bill.

**N4**: Bill realizes that if Fagin's caught, he'll be caught too. He vents his frustration by kicking Bull's-eye.

**BILL**: Let's bring this Oliver back.

## SCENE 5

**N1**: Oliver wakes up the next morning in a comfortable bed. Mrs. Bedwin, Mr. Brownlow's housekeeper, touches Oliver's



forehead.

**MRS. BEDWIN:** Your fever's gone, dear. I'll get breakfast for you. New clothes for you are on the chair.

**N2:** Oliver gets dressed and goes downstairs. He is impressed by how elegant and well-maintained everything is. He even notices the **Intricacy** of the hand-carved patterns on the banister.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** How do you feel, Oliver?

**OLIVER:** Very happy, sir—and very grateful to you.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** Something

about your face told me you were innocent. How did you get mixed up with thieves?

**N3:** Oliver explains how he ran away from the horrible workhouse and then met the Artful Dodger in the street.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** You can stay here as long as you like. Don't let me down, and I won't let you down either.

**OLIVER:** You can trust me, sir.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** I know it. Please take this money to the bookseller for me.

**N4:** Oliver is proud to have Brownlow's trust. He happily leaves on his errand.

**N1:** Bill and Nancy are waiting for Oliver outside Mr. Brownlow's house. Nancy spots Oliver and grabs him.

**NANCY (loudly):** Oliver, dear! I've finally found you!

**OLIVER:** Let me go!

**N2:** People stop to look.

**PASSERBY:** What's the matter?

**NANCY:** The naughty boy ran away from his mum.

**OLIVER:** I don't have a mother!

**BILL:** You little liar!

**PASSERBY:** How terrible for a boy to lie like that.

**N3:** Bull's-eye growls at Oliver as Bill drags Oliver back to Fagin's.

## SCENE 6

**FAGIN:** Delighted to see you, Oliver!

**N4:** Dodger picks the money Mr. Brownlow gave Oliver out of Oliver's pocket. Fagin snatches it.

**BILL:** Hand it over, you old skeleton.

**OLIVER:** No! That's Mr. Brownlow's money! He'll think I've stolen it.

**FAGIN (chuckling):** Yes, he will. What good timing.

**N1:** Oliver runs out the door.

**OLIVER:** Help! Police!

**BILL:** Fetch him, Bull's-eye!

**N2:** Nancy shuts the door and stands in front of it.

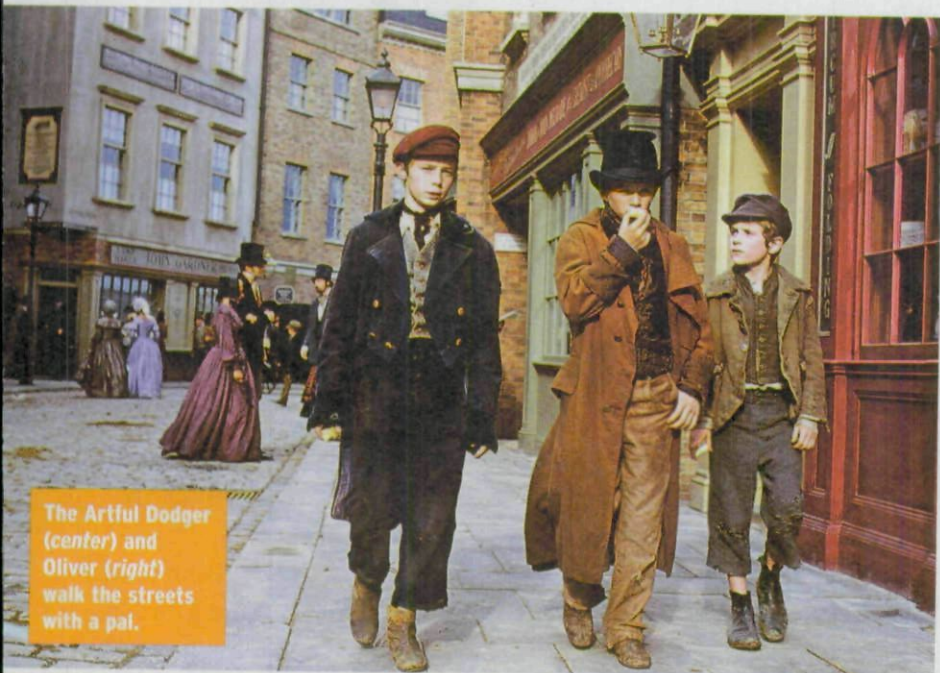
**NANCY:** No, Bill! That dog will tear him to pieces!

**BILL:** It will serve him right.

**N3:** Bill pushes Nancy out of the way and chases Oliver.

**N4:** Bill catches Oliver and drags him back to Fagin.

**FAGIN:** So, you wanted to run away, dear, did you?



The Artful Dodger (center) and Oliver (right) walk the streets with a pal.



Fagin (center) welcomes Oliver to his home.



**N1:** Fagin gives Oliver a sharp blow with a stick.

**NANCY:** Stop! Isn't it enough you're teaching him to be a thief—just like you taught me?

**BILL:** Quiet, Nancy. You helped bring him back to Fagin.

**NANCY:** May God forgive me!

## SCENE 7

**N2:** When darkness falls, Fagin takes Oliver's new clothes and gives him rags to wear.

**FAGIN:** Was it nice in that fancy house?

**OLIVER** (*quietly*): Yes.

**FAGIN:** Did you see lots of pretty things?

**BILL:** Let's go, Oliver.

**OLIVER:** Where?

**BILL:** Never you mind. See this pistol? One word out of you and I'll use it!

**N3:** Oliver is terrified. Bill takes him through the dark London streets.

**N4:** They arrive at Mr. Brownlow's house. Oliver feels sick to his stomach when he figures out what Bill has in mind.

**OLIVER:** I can't rob Mr. Brownlow!

**BILL:** You can and you will. Climb through the window and open the front door.

**N1:** Against his will, Oliver climbs through the window, carrying a lantern in his hand. Bill waits outside.

**N2:** Oliver drops the lantern as he opens the front door from inside the house. The crash wakes Mr. Brownlow. He runs downstairs holding a pistol.

**N3:** Bill opens the door, pushing Oliver to the floor.

**OLIVER:** Save me!

**N4:** Bill and Mr. Brownlow fire

their pistols at the same time.

Both Bill and Oliver are hit.

Bill throws Oliver over his shoulder and limps away down a dark alley.

**N1:** Bill drops Oliver off at Fagin's place and hobbles home.

## SCENE 8

**N2:** The next day, Fagin visits Bill. Nancy is taking care of him.

**FAGIN:** You look half-dead, Bill.

**BILL:** How's the boy?

**FAGIN:** Oliver? He'll live. But he won't be running anywhere for a while.

**BILL:** As long as he's alive, we're both as good as hanged.

**FAGIN:** What are you suggesting?

**N3:** Bill pulls Fagin closer.

**BILL** (*quietly*): I'll take care of him.

**N4:** Nancy gasps.

**BILL** (*to Nancy*): What's wrong with you?

**NANCY** (*forcing a smile*): Nothing at all, Bill.

**FAGIN:** Such a shame about the boy. With a sweet face like that, he could have picked old ladies' pockets in church.

**N1:** Bill's bullet wound is infected. He starts to feel feverish.

**BILL:** Nancy, I'm burning up. Get me my medicine.

**NANCY:** It's all gone. I'll go out for more.

**BILL:** Fagin can get it.

**NANCY:** No, I need some air.

**BILL** (*irritated*): Then stick your head out the window.

**NANCY:** Please, Bill. Let me go!

**BILL:** Absolutely not.

**N2:** Nancy slumps in her chair. Fagin doubts Nancy can be trusted. He rushes home and tells Dodger to follow her if she leaves Bill's place.



## SCENE 9

**N3:** Later that night, when Bill falls asleep, Nancy sneaks out and goes to Mr. Brownlow's house. She doesn't realize that the Artful Dodger is following her.

**NANCY:** Are you Mr. Brownlow?

**MR. BROWNLOW:** Who are you?

**NANCY:** I have information about Oliver.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** Is he safe?

**NANCY:** Yes, but not for long.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** Where is he?

**NANCY:** Fagin has him.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** What can I do for you?

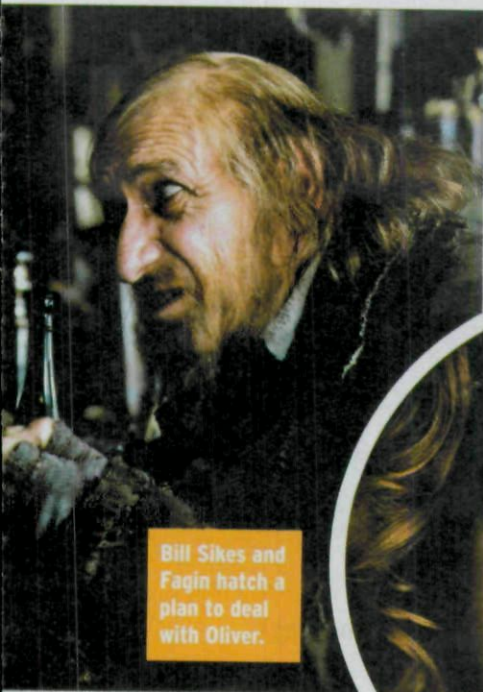
**NANCY:** Nothing. I'm past all hope.

**N4:** Nancy walks slowly back to Bill's place.

**N1:** Dodger races to Fagin's place, where he finds both Fagin and Bill. He tells them about the conversation he overheard Nancy have with Mr. Brownlow. Even though Bill's wound has **debilitated** him, he rushes home in a fit of rage.

**N2:** Bill finds Nancy at home





Bill Sikes and Fagin hatch a plan to deal with Oliver.



Oliver runs through the streets of London.



Nancy worries that Bill will hurt Oliver.

and kills her.

## SCENE 10

**N3:** Bill leaves the city for a few days. When he comes back, he sees posters everywhere that read, "Wanted for Murder: Bill Sikes."

**N4:** As night falls, Bill arrives at Fagin's. Oliver and the other boys look at him fearfully.

**FAGIN:** It's not safe for you here.

**BILL:** If it's safe for you, it's safe for me.

**N1:** A dog barks outside.

**BILL:** It's Bull's-eye. Quick! Let him in, Dodger.

**N2:** Dodger blocks the door and doesn't move. He's horrified by the fact that Bill killed Nancy.

**N3:** They hear a voice from the street.

**PASSERBY:** Hey, isn't that Bill Sikes's dog, Bull's-eye? Bill must be nearby! Call the police!

**BILL:** Dodger! Open the door at once and let Bull's-eye inside!

**DODGER:** Don't come near me, you monster!

**N4:** Dodger runs to the window and yells out to the street.

**DODGER:** Bill Sikes is here!

**N1:** Bill looks out the window. A small crowd has gathered, holding lanterns.

**CROWD:** That's him! Murderer!

**POLICE OFFICER:** Police! Open up this door!

**N2:** Bill climbs through the window onto the roof. He pulls Oliver with him.

**FAGIN:** No, Bill. He's our hostage!

**BILL:** Not ours, Fagin—mine!

**N3:** Mr. Brownlow is in the crowd.

**MR. BROWNLOW** (yells at the police): It's Oliver! Don't fire!

**N4:** Bill scrambles over the rooftops, dragging Oliver. The crowd watches from the street.

**N1:** Bill finds an old rope. Holding Oliver, he ties the rope around himself and uses it to swing to the next building.

**N2:** When Bill tries to pull the rope off above his arms, it circles

around his neck. Suddenly Bull's-eye barks. Bill turns to look at his dog—and slips off the roof!

**N3:** The crowd gasps as the rope tightens around Bill's neck. Bill dies by hanging—just as he always feared.

**N4:** The police officer climbs up a ladder. He wraps a blanket around Oliver and takes him down to Mr. Brownlow.

**MR. BROWNLOW:** Oliver—you're safe!

**N1:** The police arrest Fagin and send him to jail. Mr. Brownlow takes Oliver back to his house.

**N2:** Later, Mr. Brownlow adopts Oliver as his son. At last, Oliver finds a home.

## Write Now!

At the end of his novel, Dickens doesn't let the reader know what happens to the Artful Dodger. Make up your own ending for him. Write a monologue for Dodger, explaining what happened to him after Fagin is arrested and Oliver goes home with Mr. Brownlow.

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